



Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers

Aetna Ambulance :- Ambulance Service of Manchester :- American Ambulance Service
American Medical Response :- Campion Ambulance Service :- Hunter's Ambulance Service

Testimony of

David D. Lowell, President

Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers

Transportation Committee

Monday, March 07, 2011

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, distinguished members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is David Lowell. I am President of the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers.

I am speaking on behalf of our membership in full support of HB 6148: AN ACT REQUIRING THE OPERATOR OF A VEHICLE OTHER THAN AN EMERGENCY VEHICLE TO REMAIN AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED FEET BEHIND AN AMBULANCE THAT IS USING FLASHING LIGHTS OR A SIREN.

This bill proposes to define a minimum safety cushion behind an ambulance that is being operated in the emergency mode (lights and sirens).

Emergency response by its nature creates an environment of unpredictability on urban and rural streets as well as limited access highways. Even though today's EMT's and Paramedics receive hours of emergency vehicle operations training, the general public's response to emergency vehicles responding with lights and sirens is often times abrupt and unsafe if not totally absent when they fail to yield at all.

The laws are clear, and public education exists that directs the driver of a motor vehicle to slow, pull safely to the right and stop in order to yield to an emergency vehicle in an emergency response. In 2009, the legislature passed the move over law which requires the operator of a motor vehicle to move over to create a cushion of safety for an emergency vehicle who is parked operating on the scene of an emergency call.

These laws have helped to curb the substantial risks of motorists who do not yield the right of way or move over to provide for safe passage and operation of the emergency vehicle.

This legislation is an important next step in creating a safer response environment for ambulance operators and we applaud the young lady from Darien post 53 for asking Representative Wood to raise this bill.

Through personal experience with over 25 years as a Paramedic, I can tell you of many situations that have occurred where unsafe motorists perceive an opportunity to traverse traffic by "surfing" behind a responding ambulance. Surfing can be described as following behind a responding ambulance at a close distance bypassing all those motorists in front of the ambulance that pulled over to let the ambulance pass.

I recall vividly travelling on Rt 9 south from Cromwell to Middletown as a Paramedic taking care of a victim of a patient in the back of my ambulance. Traffic was backed up as we approached Middletown using lights and sirens because of the severity of our patient, we parted the lanes of traffic and no less than five cars fell into line behind our ambulance – "surfing" these cars cause nearly a half dozen accidents and my partner had to notify law enforcement as an attempt to stop the drivers from the unsafe act.

This occurs more frequently than you can imagine, causing great risk to the ambulance crew and surrounding motorists and pedestrians.

I urge you to support and pass this legislation as it will provide necessary standards for training for the public and infractions for the offenders.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Lowell', with a stylized, flowing script.

David D. Lowell